

29 *Light out of Darkness :*

OR, A

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Mr. *CURRIE*

AND A

COUNTRY-MAN.

BEING

A direct *REPLY* to an *ANSWER* to a
Cry from the Dead, appended to Mr. Currie's
VINDICATION;

AND

A significant *REPLY* to Mr. Currie's *ESSAY*
on Separation, and *Vindication* itself.

Mat. xii. 30. *He that is not with me, is against me.*

Mark ix. 40. *He that is not against us, is on our Part.*

CURRIE, a Minister of the Church of Scotland.
COUNTRY-MAN, a private Tradesman.

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To the Impartial and Judicious

READER.

AMONG all the liberal Arts, Astronomy is the most noble and transcendent. The learned and judicious Author Charolot, upon Death and Judgment, says, "Astronomy is the utmost Perfection of human Learning." It grieved me to see that most sublime Subject of Divinity so much perverted by Mr. Currie, in his Essay upon Separation, and Vindication, and his Answer to a Cry from the Dead, appended to his Vindication: Wherein Scripture is perverted, Reason inverted, and human Authors subverted. And especially I was moved at his using Astronomical Terms with Design to render the Seceasing Brethren odious to the World, saying in his Title-page of his Answer to a Cry from the Dead, "That Mr. Guthrie, and other Protesters in his Day, were as opposite in Principle and Practice from these that do separate from the Church of Scotland in our Day, as Nadir and Zenith, Light and Darknes." These are Terms of Art, that many of the Vulgar, yea, and of the Clergy, do not well understand.

And, shall a Divine use such Terms to amuse and deceive the Credulous in religious Matters? Mysterious Terms, among Papists, beget Devotees to their Religion: But I abhor such a Practice among true Reformed Christians, since the plain Simplicity of the Gospel is the true and genuine Method of gaining Profelytes to the Christian Faith. Therefore, and for the Reasons above-mentioned, I, knowing somewhat of the Doctrine of the Spheres, and Astronomy, thought it my Duty, as a Christian, to repulse him in the like Manner, and endeavour

deavour to stop the Current of Sophistry and Delusion, in so far as Astronomical Terms are used to deceive the Vulgar ; and have, in this Dialogue, explained his Terms of Nadir and Zenith, and detected his Error in Application of these Terms : Hoping, at least, it will put the Readers of Mr. Currie's Writings against Seceders, to the Pains to read the Seceding Brethrens Writings in their own Defence, in order to form a right Judgment of the Controversy anent Separation. But that Prophecy in Daniel 12. 10. must be accomplished, viz. Many shall be purified and made white and tried : but the Wicked shall do wickedly : and none of the Wicked shall understand, but the Wise shall understand.



The DIALOGUE.

Currie. **G**OOD Morrow, Country-man; What Pamphlet is that you have got in your Hand, and reading?

Country-Man. Sir, it is an Answer to a Pamphlet lately published by Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine*, intituled, *A Cry from the Dead; or, Mr. Guthrie's Ghost appearing.*

C. Read and consider it; for therein, I think, I have answered Mr. *Erskine's* Preface to that last Sermon of Mr. *Guthrie's*, and the Sermon itself, and other Papers published therewith.

C. M. Sir, the Title and Inscription of this says, That Mr. *Guthrie*, and other Protesters in his Day, were as opposite in Principle and Practice to the Seceding Brethren, and others, who do separate from the Church of *Scotland* in our Day, as *Nadir* and *Zenith*, Light and Darknefs. But I can find no Arguments in it, that will convince any judicious Man that it is so.

C. These Worthies never made a Seceſſion from the Church of *Scotland*, as these Seceding Brethren, in our Day, have.

C. M. These Brethren, in our Day, have not made a Seceſſion from the Church of *Scotland*, but only from the Judicatories of this Church; because of the Corruptions, Defections, arbitrary Decisions, and violent Intrusions of these Judicatories over and against the Flock and Heritage of God, even after Representations, Petitions, Protestations, &c.

C. There may be many Defections and Corruptions in a Church, and yet not just Ground for Separation.

C. M. Sir, I say again, That they have not seceded from the Church of *Scotland*, but from the Judicatories thereof; for these Brethren do closely hold and adhere to the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church of *Scotland*. And I think, the Standards of the Church may as properly be called the Church, as the Judicatories: For, how shall we know to what Church any Person belongs, but by their professing and holding to the Principles of that Church of which they are Members? And I think, it would be hard to prove that Mr. *Guthrie*, and other Protesters in his Day, were of different Principles from the Seceding Brethren in our Day.

C. The Judicatories of the Church are the Church's Representatives; and seceding from them is a Separation from the Church.

C. M. I was thinking you would criticise upon the Word
A 3 CHURCH;

CHURCH; but I would ask you, Whether the Shepherds or the Sheep can be properly called the Flock? Perhaps *Zech* 11. 16, 17. is pretty applicable to this Case.

C. Read through this Pamphlet, how opposite Mr. *Guthrie*, and others in his Day, were to the Seceding Brethren.

C. M. Your Title-page says, As opposite to one another, as *Nadir* and *Zenith*, Light and Darknes. Pray, Sir, shew me the Sense and Patness of this Comparison?

C. *Nadir* and *Zenith* are diametrically opposite to one another; and so were Mr. *Guthrie*, &c. to our Seceders.

C. M. Sophistry shall not pass for good Philosophy with me; the Terms are ambiguous, and the explicatory Phrase of *Light* and *Darkness* absurd. They, who know *Algebra*, understand how to make Transposition, and the Alternative, and would have said, *Nadir* and *Zenith*, *Darkness* and *Light*; and, according to an orderly Application, Mr. *Guthrie* is with you the *Nadir*, and our Seceding Brethren the *Zenith*: Which I apprehend is the Reverse of your Design in this Pamphlet.

C. You begin to criticise.

C. M. I will first begin to illustrate these ambiguous Terms of *Nadir* and *Zenith*, that Country-men may not be amused; for big Words fright Cowards. By *Nadir* is meant that Point under the Horizon, below our Feet, which is diametrically opposite to the *Zenith*, which is that Point of the Heavens perpendicular above our Heads. And, to apply, I affirm that you and others of our Judicatories of your Opinion are like *Azimuth Circles*, which from the Horizon, East, West, South and North, from all Rhombs, touch at *Nadir* and *Zenith*; and all vary as a Man changeth his Station, and do all cross Mr. *Guthrie* and the Seceding Brethren at right Angles: For they, like Almicanter, or Circles of Altitude, are parallel to the Horizon, and to one another, circumscribing the *Zenith* of Truth, from whence Light is reflected.

C. But our Church-judicatories are the Pillars and Ground of Truth, and, like the Magnetick Needle of the Compass, point to the Pole of Truth.

C. M. I know indeed, Sir, that there are some Places of the World, where the Magnetick Needle varies nothing from the Arctick Pole; but there are other Places, where the Magnetick Needle varies 10, 15, 20, 30 Degrees from the Pole, and true Meridian Line. And if our Standards be reckoned our Pole, then our Judicatories have varied from it these Dozen Years bygone, notwithstanding of Remonstrances, Addresses, Petitions, Grievances and Protests, made to them for some Years together: Who then will trust to sail under the Direction

rection of such Pilots as cannot or will not direct the Ship aright when such Variation happens?

C. Enough of these Mathematical Allusions: Come to the Pamphlet itself, and reply to my Answers, if you can; for in it you have in Miniature, what is prolixly handled in my *Essay upon Separation, and Vindication*.

C. M. Well, Sir, in this Pamphlet your first Observe is, That in Mr. *Guthrie's* last Sermon, and Papers published therewith, you cannot observe one Sentence favouring them that have made a Secession in our Day, but many Things in them plainly condemning their Conduct, as you say may be shown afterwards. But, Sir, have you brought forth one Sentence from it, now or afterwards in this Pamphlet, condemning the Conduct of the Seceding Brethren? Nay, Sir, you may try if you can do it sometime afterwards. Sir, you have no great Ground to rejoice at its Publication, nor fret at Mr. *Erskine* for observing Divine Providence in the Manner of the Conveyance of these Papers and Sermon.

C. Go on, Friend.

C. M. From your 2d Observe in this Pamphlet I remark, That Death cuts off the Thoughts and Purposes of Mens Hearts: And I think, I have better Ground to conclude that Mr. *Hamilton* would have seceded from the Judicatories, and joined with the Seceding Brethren, than you have to think he would not; and that because of his constant Love and Harmony with his Colleague Mr. *Erskine*; for Instance, in that Advertisement with respect to intenedd Communicants, from the Pulpit at *Stirling*, February 3d 1737 Years.

*When Phœbus was tost into Pisces Shore,
'Gainst his next Circuit Hamilton's in Glore.
Next Phœbus past the Ram, the Bull, the Twins;
And Crab; but Leo held him in his Arms,
Till Porteous-Act the Lion did emit,
And Virgo Ministers did then submit.*

C. What mean you by that Verse?

C. M. If you know any Thing in Astronomy, you'll know what I mean: However, it leads me to your 3d Observe, where you say, That Mr. *Guthrie's* refusing to acknowledge the Civil Magistrate as proper, competent, immediate Judges in Causes Ecclesiastick, which was the principal Article in his Libel for which he suffered; this, you say, is not a Controversy in our Day; and, with a Grimace, say, "Praise to God" in the Highest, this hath never been claimed or pretended "unto by any of our Kings or Magistrates since the Revolu-

"tion." But, Sir, have you so soon forgot that Act of Parliament anent Captain *John Porteous*, whereby from the Pulpit the Ministers in *Scotland* were ordered to read that Act the first Sabbath of every Month for a Year? And the first Penalty, in case of Disobedience, was to cut off the Right and Privilege of Ministers from sitting and voting in any Judicatory of the Church of *Scotland* for the first Omission, and forfeiting their legal Benefices for the second. Now, Sir, was this, think you, no Intrusion upon the Rights and Privileges of the Church of *Scotland*? Will not true Presbyterians take Notice of this Erastian Incroachment upon the Courts of the King of *Zion*? Yet the greatest Part of Ministers yielded Obedience to that Act the second Sunday, for fear of losing their legal Stipends: But the first Penalty was little at Heart, and many could venture to lose their Claim as Members of Christ's Courts, who would not venture to lose their Title to the legal Stipends.

*Our Stipend lies in Virgo's Lap,
O do not rouse us from our Nap.*

C. You are a stout Casuist, or else you would wink at the Weakness of these Ministers who read that Act; for they are subject to Failings as well as other Men.

C. M. I shall not say but the second Penalty is a Civil Penalty, and the State might inflict the Forfeiture; but then Presbytery might subsist without it, for legal Stipends are not essential to the Being of Presbytery: But the first Penalty is altogether Ecclesiastick. And had the Assembly, who met in *May* thereafter, judicially declared against it as an Erastian Usurpation, and contrary to the Principles of this Church, they had done but their Duty; but, instead of that, they homologate it, and thereby have changed their Holding.

C. You that are Country-Men, have wrong Apprehensions of that Act of Parliament; for, as I say in the 165 Page of my *Vindication*, the Ministers, who read that Act, only thought the Penalties in that Act meant no more than that they should lose the Countenance and Protection of the Civil Government, if they refused Obedience to that Act.

C. M. A witty Apology indeed, Sir; there is more Knavery than Honesty in such an Apology. The Law is Death to him that kills his Neighbour; and, is there no more meant by it, but that the Murderer shall lose the Countenance and Protection of the Civil Government for his Life? What Juggling is this! Any just Judge, Sir, would pass a Sentence of Death upon the Guilty, and order, not a passive, but an active, Execution of the Sentence.

C. I

C. I have Charity for every Minister who read that Act of Parliament, that they did not act contrary to the Light of their own Minds.

C. M. Indeed you may thank the King for his Clemency, in not inflicting the Penalty: But, I am perswaded, the King will never make such Interpreters of the Law competent Judges; especially if his Majesty considered how our Judicatories have condemned the Seceding Brethren, and cast them out of the Church; and assailed one of their Number, who was condemned as *Infamous* by the Lords of his Majesty's Court of Justiciary. And, whatever the Minds of the Readers of *Porteau's Act* be, I wish they would unmask themselves, and declare they are not Presbyterians in Principle, as a certain Author of a Pamphlet I read anent *Porteau's-Act* appears to be; I am not positive who he is, but 'tis said he is blind of one Eye, and dwells near an old Cathedral Church not above Ten Miles distant from the Centre of *Scotland*; and it puts me in mind of an old Prophecy, "That they who dwell under the *Cyclades* " would be very wise Men."

*The great Wain, Cepheus and Cassiopæ
over his Head in round Procession gae:
But where his Wisdom lies I cannot find,
unless it be in whirling like the Wind.*

C. You seem to have a nice Taste, Friend.

C. M. Sir, my Taste is not vitiated by you.

C. I own there are Defections in the Church, and others have born Testimony against them as well as the Seceding Brethren: Did you never read the *Seasonable Testimony*, and my *Essay upon Separation*?

C. M. Yes, I have; but they never come to the Point or Merits of the Cause, as it is stated by Mr. *William Wilson* in his *Defence of the Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland*. Like *Job's* three Friends, who never touched upon the Points of his Complaint, your 4th Observe says, That there was a Door opened by the Assembly 1734 for the Seceding Brethren to come in again. But the Iron Grate of the Act of Assembly 1733, against Ministers Freedom to preach or speak against the Faults of Judicatories, stands in full Force. And what honest Man will accept of personal Freedom, while the Cause for which they suffer lies wounded and bleeding? What does it amount to, to a Prisoner, to have the Prison-door opened, and Freedom to go out at Liberty, when the Chain is tied to his Feet, and can go no further than the Length of his Chain, and can be tugged and drawn back again at the Judge's Pleasure?

C. M.

C. It seems you take Pleasure in Schism and Divisions.

C. M. What you call *Schism* in the Church, is called *Sedition* in the State; and I declare unto you, I love neither of them: But I am for the Union of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; and the Spirit, I mean, is the Spirit of Truth, and not the Spirit of Error.

C. What, Man, did ever I write in favours of Error?

C. M. Yes, Sir, ye do; as appears from your very next Observe 5th of this Pamphlet, where you say, "That the *Novatians* and *Donatists* were Hereticks; yet, say you, they never separate from the Truth, nor did they quit their Holding of Christ the Head, nor the Order he has appointed in his House, except in so far as they separate from the Church." But, would you have all the People to believe you, and give implicate Faith to what you say, as the ignorant Papists give to their Jesuite Priests?

C. My Design is to shew that they are Hereticks who separate from the Church, altho' they do not separate from the Truth.

C. M. The *Novatians* held *second Marriages* to be unlawful, and they would not receive back to their Communion again such as failed or swerved in Persecution, let their Repentance be never so sincere. And the *Donatists* held, that *Circumcelion* or *Self-murder*, to get them a Name and Repute, was lawful. Now, Sir, are not such Tenets a separating from the Truth, and a quitting hold of Christ the Head, and the Order he has appointed in his House. You are, Sir, a Divine; therefore I would have you to consider that divine Sentence, *Isa. 5. 20. Wo to him that calls Evil good, and Good evil; that puts Light for Darkness, and Darkness for Light.* And, can there be any Thing more absurd, than for you to call them Hereticks, who, you say, never separated from the Truth? &c.

C. Go on.

C. M. From your 6th Observe I remark, That you find Fault with Mr. *Erskine* for saying, That a harmonious Coalition not granted, must be either because the Judicatories of this Church will not, or because they cannot, reform. Which two Horns of this Dilemma, you think, you have so answered, as that they can neither hurt, nor draw Blood. I doubt not but you have more Brass than Steel, in saying so. But, Sir, remember, Christ gave the Keys to *Peter*, and not to *Cesar*: And, at what Time and Occasion gave he them to *Peter*? Even then, when he witnessed a good Confession, saying, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.* By which Confession, he, as a true Disciple, resembled his Master, who witnessed a good
Con-

Confession before *Pontius Pilate*. Upon this Confession it was, that he got the Keys. And he and the Sentence of all Christ's Office-bearers must be founded upon this Rock of Truth, upon this grand Confession; or else they have no Title to the Keys, or Power to bind and loose in Heaven. And I would ask you a Question, which I hope you will not decline to answer, viz. Whether *Peter* did not lose the Power of the Keys, when he denied his Master?

C. The Judicatories of our Church have not denied the Independency and Supremacy of the Son of God.

C. M. But they did not confess and judicially affirm it against Mr. *Simson*, who impugned it, and denied his *Necessary Existence* and *Supremacy*: For then was a fit Time, and a necessary Call for them to affirm and confess it against him. *Peter*, who denied his Master, was recovered again by Repentance; and, for a new Trial, Christ asked him three Times in *John 21*. *Simon Bar-Jonas, lovest thou me?* And *Peter* three Times said, *Lord, thou knowest that I love thee*. From whence I infer, That, when the Church meets with Trials of the like Nature, it is their Duty again and again to confess Christ, as often as he is denied by Adversaries; which our Judicatories omitted to do in Opposition to *Simson*.

C. But I told you, that *that* Dilemma of Mr. *Erskine's* I have fully answered; and you'll find it so in 15, 16, and 17 Pages of my *Vindication*.

C. M. Sir, you advance something of human Authorities, and cast up what was wrong in the Acts made in 1642 and 1649. But two Blacks make not a White. The Seceding Brethren commend not what was wrong, but applaud what was right in these Assemblies, and take the Denomination from the better Part: But, if we take the Denomination of the present Judicatories from the greater Part of their Deeds, we shall find them to be quite reverse of what was in these Days. It is a common Saying among Merchants, That two Feet forward, and one backward, is good Trading; and so it was with the Church from 1638 to 1649. But now our Judicatories go two Steps backward, for one Step forward; and that makes a bad Trade indeed.

C. But the Power of the Keys is in the major Number of the Church, and the minor Part ought to submit to them in all judicial Determinations.

C. M. Is not Christ, the glorious King of *Zion*, appointed and anointed by the Father absolute sovereign Legislator over *Zion* the Hill of his Holiness? And, will any Judiciary pretend to be Co-legislator with him? And, has he not given Laws
to

to his Church and People fully and sufficiently for the Government thereof? Which sovereign Laws, when they are perverted by the Disciples of his House, ought to be highly regarded; and these Disciples ought to be withdrawn from as wicked, specially after all Pains have been taken upon them to reclaim them, and yet continue obstinate and will not be reclaimed. I need not give particular Accounts of the Defections of the Church, and of their perverting the Laws of Christ, seeing you own it in your *Essay upon Separation* and many Instances are mentioned in the *Seasonable Testimony*.

C. Go on to the rest of my Observes in the Pamphlet.

C. M. From your 7th and last Observe, I find you take it ill, that Mr. *Erskine* should charge you with destroying what you formerly built up. But, Sir, remember your *Jus populi divinum*. And as for Mr. *Erskine's* saying, That, if he had been favoured with a Sight of your Manuscript before Publication, he is perswaded it had never seen the Light. This may excuse him, that you never told him of your writing against him, nor sent to him, tho' within a few Miles of your House: And a Rumour in the Country about your writing was not sufficient Ground for him to come and call for your Manuscript. And indeed, Sir, tho' you are so bold, as to affirm in your *Vindication*, "That your *Essay upon Separation* gave much Satisfaction to many;" yet I say, That there had been no Loss, tho' all your Writings had never seen the Light. Read *Mat. 6. 23. When the Light that is in them is Darkness, how great is that Darkness!*

C. Well, Friend, you have replied to my Observations upon Mr. *Erskine's* Preface to Mr. *Guthrie's* Sermon: But now read on the other Arguments I use from Mr. *Guthrie's* Sermon itself, and Papers published therewith; and there you'll find such rational and scriptural Arguments as you will not find easy to refute.

C. M. Will you go any higher than the *Zenith* above, or deeper than the *Nadir* below, with your Arguments?

C. Let alone Flights, and come to solid Arguments. I say and affirm, That we ought to keep Communion with a Church as long as the Lord keepeth Communion with them.

C. M. The other Day I was reading your *Vindication*, and in the 79 Page you form your Proposition thus; That when we separate from a Church, with which Christ keeps Communion, we interpretatively condemn him for keeping Communion with them, with whom we cannot keep Communion; and you think *Durham*, *Hog* and *Jenkins* support you in it. But, Sir, great Men are not always wise, nor learned Men always judicious:

dition: And you may be mistaken as to the Meaning of these great and godly Men. But, pardon me, I must tell you, your Proposition is not judicious; for there is no Comparison between God and Man. *Who in Heaven can be compared unto him? or who in Earth can be likened unto him? His Ways are not as our Ways, neither his Thoughts as our Thoughts.* Know, Sir, that the spotless Purity of the holy One of Israel cannot be tainted by keeping Communion with Sinners: And God keeps sometimes Communion with them by Reproofs, and Rebukes of his Word and Spirit, as well as by Comforts and Consolations. And we must not make God's Dealings with Men, the Rule of our Actions: For in *Job* we read, that *he giveth Account of none of his Matters*; but his Law is the Rule of our Duty.

C. There are Scriptures against Separation; what say you to them?

C. M. In this Pamphlet you advance *Song* 1. 8. *Go thy Way by the Footsteps of the Flock.* And from it I notice, That it says not go thy Way by the Footsteps of the Shepherds, but by the Footsteps of the *Flock*: For many Shepherds in our Day are like the Scribes and Pharisees, of whom we read, *Mat.* 15. 14. But, Sir, were the Sentiments of Christ's Flock in the Land taken up by Vote, they would condemn the Judicatories of the Church for screening the Erroneous, and carrying on a Course of violent Intrusions upon the People in many Parishes in *Scotland*; and, to crown all, have cast out such faithful Ministers as have emitted a Testimony against the same: I say, They would condemn such Proceedings of Judicatories, hearing none of Christ's Voice in them; for Christ's *Sheep hear his Voice, and a Stranger's Voice they will not follow.* Yea, they, who have not gone from hearing you in the Pulpit, would condemn such Proceedings of Judicatories.

C. I also adduce *Heb.* 6. 12. against Separation.

C. M. The Text says, *Be not slothful, but Followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.* And the Allusion is to *Abraham* in that Chapter, and other Saints recorded in the 11th Chap. of that Epistle. And indeed 'tis plain, that this Scripture makes for the Seceding Brethren, and nowise against them: For none can say they are slothful in their Office, as too many among you are; but they suffer and bear their Trials in Faith and Patience, as these holy Men did, and at last shall inherit the Promises. And I think you, who are a Divine, might know the Import of Scripture better than to advance such Texts as make nowise for your Purpose, but militate most strongly against you.

C. Our Lord Jesus never separated from the *Jewish Church* for all the Corruptions were in it.

C. M.

C. M. Sir, that is a mighty Argument with you, and I find it is frequently cast up in your *Vindication* as an invincible Argument against Separation; but as *Job* said to his Friend, *Job* 6. 25. *How forcible are right Words! but what doth your Arguing reprove?* Doth not Christ tell us, that it became him to fulfil all Righteousness? Therefore he was circumcised, kept the Passover, and all other Ordinances of *Moses's* Law, till he finished the End and Design thereof in his own Death; and they are no more to be continued in the Christian Church. But, as to the Corruptions in the *Jewish* Church, dare you say he joined in them? Nay, he scourged Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, reprov'd their Errors and Corruptions in his Sermon on the Mount, and everywhere denounces Woes and Judgments against the Scribes and Pharisees for their Hypocrisy.

C. But he never separated from them because of their Corruptions, nor his Apostles after him.

C. M. May not Papists advance this Argument against all Protestants, as justly as you do against the Seceding Brethren? Christ and his Apostles brought the Christian Church to Maturity by Degrees, after which no more *Judaism*. And I am persuaded, that, had you been a Member of the Council of *Trent*, your good Nature would so fall'n in with this Argument, as you would never have protested against them, nor separate from the Church of *Rome*. And indeed the Church of *Rome* hath better Ground to thank you for your voluminous Writings than our Assembly had.

C. You have very harsh Thoughts of me, or you would not say so; and 'tis as much as if I would condemn all Protestants for their Separation from the Church of *Rome*.

C. M. Sir, I hope I do not misconstrue you when I say so; for there is no Church upon Earth so wicked as the *Jewish* Church was. In the 14th Page of your *Vindication*, you say, The Pharisees blasphemed the Name of God the Son, and called him an Impostor, one in Compact with the Devil; that they were guilty of the Sin against the Holy Ghost: And *Joseph* and *Nicodemus* sat with them that denied the Son of God, and thirsted to have the innocent Lamb of God murdered. Now, Sir, I ask you, if the Popish Church be more wicked, or can there be a more wicked Church upon Earth than they were? yet you'll use such Arguments against Separation. O strange Reasoning, and inconsistent with the Marks you give of a true Church in your *Essay*!

C. Mr. *Guthrie* was against Separation; as appears from that Protest, *July* 21st 1652, signed by him and other Protesters.

C. M. That Protest says, That they thought it their Duty
firmly

firmly to adhere to the Church of Scotland, wherein they did enjoy the Purity of Doctrine and Worship, and the Government Christ has appointed in his House; and let any Man judge whether the established Church or the Seceding Brethren be purest in these Points.

C. Mr. Guthrie, and other Protesters in his Day, never separate from the Church.

C. M. Sir, all Times are not equal; pray what a-Clock of the Day is it?

C. Look, here is a good Watch, which doth tell the true Hour and Minute of the Day.

C. M. It may shew the equal Hour, but not the true Hour; but you have an Equation-table in your Watch-case, whereby you can reduce the equal Time to the true Time; and *contra*. But, can you tell me from whence the Inequality of Time proceeds? for the true and equal Time are never the same, but when the Sun is in the Equinoctial and Solstitial Collars. I know not if you understand *Astronomy*, or not; but, if you would know this much of regulating Time, you must observe this Verse.

*The Obliquity of the Ecliptick Line,
To the Equator, makes unequal Time.
Bring the Sun's Place to the Meridian,
And there observe his right Ascension:
The Difference of Degrees upon Equator
Will let you understand a Regulator.*

C. What have we to do with these Things?

C. M. And what had you to do to compare former Periods to the present Time, when there is no Parallel betwixt them? Let us take a View of the State of the Church from 1638 to this present Time, by this Verse.

*Phœbus twelve Times his annual Circuit went,
Ere Cromwell did usurp the Government.
The Church in Reformation then arose,
Altho' the King did greatly it oppose.
Twice ten Times Phœbus crost the Torrid Zone;
Ere Charles the Second did remount his Throne.
They who resolv'd, 'gainst them that did protest,
Did in this Period keep the Church from Rest.
Twenty and five Times Phœbus circuled
Round the Zodiack, ere the King was dead.
The Royal Sceptre James did three Years sway,
Till a sweet Orange frighted him away.*

*The Church establish'd then in Prelacy
Were bitter Enemies to Presbyt'ry.
Now they're put down, and Presbyt'ry put up,
And now our Church is turned most corrupt;
For now the Courts of Presbyterian Name
Oppress their Flock, and Brethren true condemn.*

C. There is no Precedent in former Periods for Separation.

C. M. There is no Parallel in former Periods to the present Time: For then the Church wanted the Countenance of the Civil Government; and in King *Charles I.* his Time they were opposed by the King in the Reformation; and in *Charles II.* his Reign the established Church was Prelacy and Episcopacy: But now there is no such outward Constraint upon the Church. The Judicatories may reform if they will, and the Civil State will not oppose them in it; therefore it is their Sin that they do not reform. I would ask one Question more, *viz.* If Truth be *Zenith*, then whether are *Cocentrical* or *Excentrical Circles* parallel to it?

C. What need of so much Astronomy?

C. M. Sir, you gave me a Precedent, when you spoke of *Nadir* and *Zenith*; but now, I think, I am foot-side with you: And, I hope, you'll no more disturb the World with Sophistry instead of good Philosophy. But please take this Fable for my Apology. Upon a Day some young Crabs were going side-ways; their Mamma cries to them, Why go ye all side-ways? cannot ye go straight forward? They answered, Mamma, shew us an Example: Then, when she essay'd to do it, but could not, the young Ones were exempted from Nurture.

C. I understand the Moral of your Fable; for you mean, that my *Essay upon Separation* is but a side-ways Performance.

C. M. Yes, Sir; for, were Mr. *Guthrie*, and other Protesters, in his Day firm Adherers to the Doctrine, Worship and Government of our Covenanted Church of *Scotland*? so are the Seceding Brethren. Were they loyal to their Sovereign King? so are the Seceding Brethren. Did they suffer for the Truth? so do the Seceding Brethren. Did Mr. *Bogues* advise to take good heed upon what Grounds they did separate? this the Seceding Brethren have done. And the Grounds of their Secession are to be found in their judicial *Act and Testimony* published to the World.

C. Farewel, Friend; I now see Men have different Lights of Things.

C. M. Adieu, Sir.

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